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State seeks \$100 million to rebuild Coast public housing

(JACKSON, Mississippi) -- Governor Haley Barbour has asked federal authorities to approve up to \$100 million to help public housing agencies repair and rebuild affordable housing in coastal areas most devastated by Hurricane Katrina.

Governor Barbour announced that the Mississippi Development Authority on Thursday submitted to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) a plan to cover uninsured losses at public housing properties. Funds are being requested from an allocation of \$5 billion previously approved by the federal government for Mississippi's recovery.

"Affordable housing continues to be a pressing need for communities on the Coast," Governor Barbour said. "This grant will allow the public housing authorities to leverage other available resources in repairing and developing new affordable housing targeting low and very low income Gulf Coast residents."

The state is seeking HUD's preliminary approval of the plan, Governor Barbour said. Once this is obtained, the plan will be published for public comment and made available at www.MsHomeHelp.gov, and local city halls and libraries in Hancock, Harrison and Jackson Counties.

The funds, totaling up to \$100 million, will be made available to the Gulfport-based Mississippi Regional Housing Authority No. VIII and public housing authorities in Bay St. Louis, Biloxi, Waveland and Long Beach. More than 90 percent of the nearly 2,700 public housing units operated by these five authorities were damaged in the hurricane, with approximately 10 percent of their units being totally destroyed.

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